



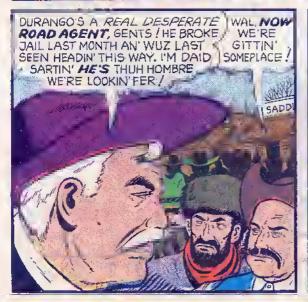


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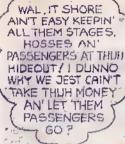












WE'RE KEEPIN' 'EM AT THUH HIDEOUT SO THAR WON'T BE ANY CLUES OR EVIDENCE AG'IN US! LET ME DO THUH THINKIN', IDAHO. WE'LL SOON MAKE OUR PILE AN' CLEAR OUT...!



HOLY SMOKE ? PURANGO KID!
HOMBRE ON THUH
HOMBRE ON THUH
POSTER ?







BURANGO DUCKS THE POSSE - BUT ONLY TO RIDE









THEY
DELIBERATELY PUT
THE SHERIFF ON THE
WRONG TRACK!
FOR SOME REASON,
THOSE THREE HOMBRES
DON'T WANT ME

WONDER WHY? AND NOW - THEY'RE RIDING WAY...



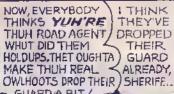
A FEW HOURS LATER ..

THIS LOOKS LIKE THE PLACE, ALL RIGHT- ACCORDING TO MY INSTRUCTIONS...



WELL RIGHT-AND IT LOOKS LIKE YOU SHERIFF- DID TOO. YOU SHORE GAVE US A LOOKS LIKE RUN FER OUR MONEY, DURANGO!... YOU DUCKED IT GUESS OUR PLAN'S WORKIN! YOUR POSSE, IT WUZ A GOOD IDEA OF MINE. ALL RIGHT. CALLIN' YOU IN ON THUH CASE...







THAT HOMBRE IN THE CHECKERED HAT- THOSE
AND HIS BUDDIES- GUYS
SAW ME THIS WERE
AFTERNOON BUT THEY BUCK
SENT YOU OFF THE BARTON'S
WRONG WAY! MEN!

WHY DID THEY DO THAT?... RIGHT! BUT NOW-IF THEY WERE WE WON'T GIT ITHE REAL ROAD AGENTS A CHANCE TUH IT WOULD BE MIGHT! DO ANTHIN' ABOUT HANDY FOR THEM TO IT - HYAR COMES HAVE A PHONY MUH POSSE, MUSTA SUSPECT RUNNING POLLOWED MUH TRACKS! AROUND, RIGHT? WHUT D'WE DO NOW?



ONLY ONE THING
TO DO, SHERIFF - ARREST
ME! HERE'S MY GUN, WE'LL
FIGURE OUT SOMETHING
LATER ON!

TARNATION-I DIDN'T COUNT ON THIS!



ALL RIGHT, HEY, LOOK- GREAT WORK, SHERIFF!
HOMBRE - THUH SHERIFF'S LET'S GIT'IM IN JAIL!
MOVE! GOT 'IM! HE'S TRICKY!



NOW LISSEN CLOSE,

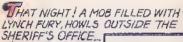
GIT SOME O'THUH BOYS TUH



WORK THUH SALOONS, WHIP HULLABALOO
UP A LYNCH MOB SEE? AN' THEN...

GIT IT, WE'LL

RAISE A



BRING HM AND UL! | DUNNO EF OUT! BRING) I KIN HOLD 'EM OFF! OUT THET WOTTA FIX!



THEN THROUGH A BACK DOOR.

COME ON; DURANGO-LOOKS LIKE MOVE! YUH'RE I'VE GOT NO COMIN' WITH US! CHOICE!



WE GOT YORE HORSE FER YUH, DURANGO. HOP ON AN' COME ALONG

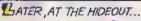
THEN YOU'RE NOT PART OF THE YNCH MOB? YOU'RE HELPING ME BREAK JAIL !



THET'S RIGHT! WE GOT ORDERS TUH BRING YUH TUH OUR HIDE OUT. YUH'LL NEED A GOOD PLACE TUH LAY LOW FER AWHILE.

WELL-THANKS. MISTER!





SO-HERE'S WHERE THOSE STAGES AND

RIGHT! SMART, HUH ? YUH'RE PART OF OUR GANG NOW, DURANGO-THUH BOSS WANTS IT THET WAY, YUH'LL DRAW REGULAR RIDIN' PAY AN YUH'LL



















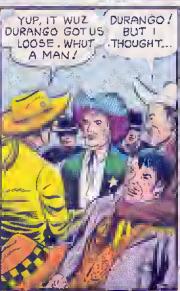












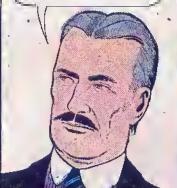




IT'S A GOOD GUESS, STEVE.
SEE THAT "R" ENGRAVED
IN THIS CORNER ? THAT'S
POP REMSEN'S SIGNATUREAND MY HUNCH IS THAT
IT'S HIS WAY OF SIGNAL



MY GUESS IS THIS-A COUNTER-FEITING GANG HAS KIDNAPPED POP REMSEN AND IS FORCING HIM TO TURN OUT HOT MONEY FOR THEM. YOUR JOB IS TO FIND HIM AND SMASH THAT COUNTERFEIT RING!

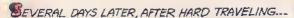


WEVE TRACED THE RING TO SOMEWHERE NEAR BIG ROCK, BUT THAT'S ALL WE KNOW.



THAT'S ENOUGH!

COLUMN SEPTEM



GOLLY, I'M TIRED! LOOKS ABANDONED TO ME, RECKON WE KIN MULEY, BUT LET'S GO UP AND FRESHEN UP A BIT SEE. AT LEAST IT'LL BE SHELTER AT THET RANCH BEFORE WE HIT MIGHT BE A WELL WHERE WE





WE DON'T NEED A GUN TO TELL US WE'RE NOT WELCOME, MISTER!



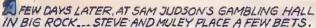
...AND THEN WE'LL DOWNRIGHT LEAVE! I DON'T THINK IMPOLITE. I CALL IT! COMPANY ANYWAY!

AT THAT MOMENT-IN THE BAR-W RANCH HOUSE.

WOW, THET) EF HE'DA COME ONE STEP EVERY-STRANGER CLOSER TUH THIS RANCH THING SHORE ROUGHED HOUSE, WE'DA FILLED HIM OKAY, UP PETE, ALL FULLA HOLES / BOYS ?











BLAZES / IT'S PHONY
MONEY, ALL RIGHT - BUT
IT'S EVEN BETTER STUFF
THAN WHAT WE'RE
PUTTING OUT / SEND THAT
HOMBRE IN TO SEE ME - AND
SEND IN SOME OF
THE BOYS, TOO!











I'LL HAVE THE LOOKS LIKE THIS GUN DON'T SCARE PHONIES...BUT YOU, MISTER OKAY, YOU BE SURE I'LL BUY YOUR HOT, TO HAVE THE MONEY, HAVE THE STUFF HERE LONG! TONIGHT!



FOLLOW THAT JASPER, INDIAN JOE. MAYBE HE'LL LEAD YOU TO WHERE HIS PLATES ARE HIDDEN. GET IT



THERE IS NO MORE CLEVER MAN ON THE TRAIL THAN INDIAN JOE ...



WAL, PLENTY, SHERIFF! I THINK I'M TOH-OH-OH! STEVE - ONTO THAT COUNTERFEITING 50 THAT'S RING THIS TIME. I'LL BE HIS GAME. LUCK ? CLOSING IN ON THEM TONIGHT, WAIT TILL 50 YOU HAVE YOUR POSSE THE BOSS MAN SADDLED AND READY FOR HEARS ABOUT ACTION. THIS!



INDIAN JOE BURNS UP THE TRAIL BACK TO JUDSON'S GAMBLING HALL.

BLAZES - A DEPUTY MARSHAL! AND I FELL RIGHT INTO THE TRAP! IT'S TIME TO PULL OUT, BOYS - THE LAW'S ON OUR TRAIL BUT BEFORE WE DO - I'M GOING TO FINISH THAT DEPUTY MARSHAL - AND OLD MAN







NOT YET-TOO
MANY PEOPLE IN THE
GAMBLING HALL. WE'LL
WAIT TILL WE CLOSE UP
FOR THE NIGHT AND THEN
WE CAN GET HIM OUT
UNDER COVER OF
OF HIM WHERE IT'S



MEANWHILE, LET'S GET TO HE
THE HIDEOUT, HIDE OUR EQUIP— WON'T
MENT AND DO AWAY WITH OLD GIT
REMSEN. KEEP YOUR EYE ON AWAY,
HIM, PETE / BOSS!



DEST DON'T TRY ANY FUNNY STUFF HOMBRE, 'CAUSE MY PET HOBBY IS KILLIN' DEPUTY MARSHALS!









WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO TO GO TO'IT, PARDNER!
THOSE HOMBRES JUST I'LL GIT THUH SHERIFF
ISN'T PROPER FOR A
DEPUTY MARSHAL! BUT ALL BE THAR TUH
FOR THE DURANGO
BACK YORE PLAY!





HEY, LOOK / ON THIS ONE, THERE'S A "W" WHERE REMSEN USED TO PUT HIS "R". DO YOU THINK __??? THUH "BAR -W" RANCH!

BY GOLLY -THUH PLACE WE

GOT KICKED OFF A FEW

DAYS BACK. I THOUGH! THAR

WUZ SOMETHIN' FISHY 'BOUT



SHORT WHILE LATER - IN THE CELLAR OF THE

GOOD, WE'LL TAKE 50, Y00'RE ALL READY. A MURDERER. THEM WITH US. BOSS/WE GOT TOO ?WELL THUH PLATES AND NOW - WE DON'T NEED SHOOT AN' PRESSES YOUR TALENTS ANY LONGER, AWAY, YUH ALL PACKED. REMSEN. VARMINT!

















THEY called him Old Pete. That was the only name he had, the only name he needed. From the headwaters of the Pecos River to the Milk River range in Montana, he had roved the plains and mountains, searching for gold. He knew the deserts, and he knew the waterholes. And now Old Pete had reached his goal. His bulging sacks were crammed with a fortune in the elusive yellow metal.

He chortled to himself. "Heh-heh! Doggone if I ain't went and done it! Found me as rich a vein of the stuff as anybody ever

saw!"

He halted the burro to check the leather thongs that held the worn canvas sacks that hung heavy on the Arizona pack saddle.

"A whole fortune, all for myself. Yessirreebob! There's nobody as can out-dress or outspend Old Pete from now on! I found my pile, and I aim to have me some fun!"

It was close to noon when the three riders rein-sawed their horses to a stop. Old Pete had watched them for an hour as they quartered across the desert toward him. He waved a hand in greeting, studying them with wise old eyes, seeing the low-hung Colts, the wear and dust of long, fast travel, the dried foam on the horses' sleek sides.

"Howdy, gents," Old Pete said. "You hombres 're a mite off the trail, ain't yuh? Yuh're

cow-ropers!"

The tallest of the three, a man with heavy shoulders and with a reddish scar zigzagging across his lower jaw, nodded glumly. "Lost our way, Pop. I reckon you ain't lost. You old prospectors know these deserts like they were yore own hand. Mind if we ride with yuli?"

Old Pete grunted. He liked loneliness. It didn't suit him to have three cold-eyed men riding side by side with him as he hit in toward River Gap. But he said. "Suit yerselves, But I got to walk, I ain't rich enough to ride a bronc!" Old Pete chuckled in his throat as he plodded on through the said.

He did not see the three men exchange quick glances at that triumphant chuckle, did not see the eyes narrow in suspicion as they ran over the pack-saddle, over the bulging sacks strapped to the Saint Andrew's cross on the cross-buck. Their lips narrowed, and they pulled their Stetsons lower over their sun-baked faces and rode with their shoulders hunched to the blistering heat.

Heavy Colts revolvers beabed at their hips, and the dull brown stocks of Winchester 44-40s nodded gently at their horses' every step.

The men rode into the heat and the sunlight, breathing air that seemed cooked in an oven, feeling the noonday sun drain at their bodies, hunting out the moisture and the sweat, evaporating it before it could form on their chests and foreheads. Even Old Pete grunted his approval of them, along about sundown. They, like himself, were of the desert breed.

"Yuh hombres ain't no tenderfeet. Yuh been around. Give me to hand with these packs," he told them. "I'll whup up some

supper."

The three men were silent, even while the savory odors filtered from Old Pete's cooking pan and into the cool night air. They sat cross-legged, near their saddles, while their mounts stood less than five feet behind them, ground-reined on the sand. Their cold eyes noted that Old Pete's worn canvas sacks were equally close to him while he cooked with his skillet.

When they were through eating, they pulled Wheeling stogies from their pockets, and offered him one. Old Pete took it, turning it in his fingers. "A poor man's Corona-Corona," he nodded: "Some day I'll have all

the Coronas I want."

"Strike it rich, Pop?" asked the young one, a slim, wiry youth who wore a black shirt with pearl buttons, and levis so dark blue that they appeared to match the shirt. His Colts' butt-plates were mother-of-pearl. Old Pete had him tabbed as a dude.

"Nope," said Old Pete. "But I still got

hopes."

The man with the scar laughed and gestured at the bulging canvas sacks. "Bet yuh plenty yuh got gold right there in them sacks, Pop." he grinned.

"Nope, Nope, I ain't," almost shouted Old Pete. "You stay away from them sacks!"

The man with the scar chuckled, and got to his feet. "Sure, Pop. Anything you say." But under the wide brim of his Stetson, his eyes touched briefly on the hard faces of his companions. Both of them nodded imperceptibly. They sat and watched Old Pete drag his sacks off to one side of the campfire, where he sat, muttering and mumbling to himself.

The three men finished their cigars in silence, then rose almost as one man, and walked twenty feet away. Old Pete never took his eyes from them as they unrolled their blankets, lay down on them, and with a deft twist, wrapped themselves up like bugs in cocoons.

The old man sat for hours, staring into the dying embers of the fire. He felt the cold chill of the night air go through him. Like

the cold of the grave, he thought. He was marked for death. He knew the signs. Their chuckles and their light talk did not fool him. They knew he carried gold in those

sacks. They meant to take it.

Old Pete sighed. The desert breed did not whimper. He thought of the desert and her moods, almost the moods of a woman in their quick change. Those who lived on the desert, like the horned toad and the cactus rat, made the desert a very comfortable place. Knowing what its plants had to offer, they ate and drank where there seemingly was no food or water.

He lifted his head. His eyes were hard and cold. He stared at the three motionless shapes. He got to his feet and went away from them, fifty, then one hundred, then four hundred feet. When he found what he wanted he went to work, taking his long knife from its sheath, and using it.

Dawn came up in a blaze of red fire that tinted the sand and the sotol shrubs with blood. Here and there the blunt stems of an ocotillo stood up beside the giant's fingers of a saguaro cactus. The maguey plant thrust its spiked leaves upward beside the low leaves of the soap plant. The desert was wakening under the touch of the sun's rays.

From where he knelt over his fire, Old Pete watched the three men unroll themselves, stretch, and walk across toward him, shaking their blankets free of sand. The man with the jaw-scar came to stand in front of Old Pete. "How far are we from River Gap, Pop?" he wanted to know.

"Not far," said Old Pete. "'Bout thirty

mile as the hawk flies,"

The man with the scar nodded. "I reckon yuh know who we are." His voice came hard and cold. "Mebbe yuh don't know our faces, but yuh sure know we ain't cowpokes."

"Yore hands are too soft to know 'bout lassos an' brandin' irons," nodded Old Pete. "Yuh know more 'bout cards an' guns than yuh do 'bout honest work."

The scarfaced man chuckled. "You use

yore eyes - like we do."

Old Pete looked up sharply, fighting down the fear that crept up from his guts and out through his throat to his trembling lips. The man with the scar said, "Open those sacks!"

"No, by —!"

The man whirled him, a hand to his shoulder, sending him ten feet away and into the sand. The youth with the black shirt dropped his right hand and lifted a Colt, holding it aimed at Old Pete's middle. The man with the scar upended a sack on his saddle blanket. A score of big gold nuggets tumbled out. The youth with the black shirt swore in awe.

Old Pete jumped while their eyes were fastened to his nuggets. His hands dove for

the gun that the youth held, wrestling for it. The third man moved swiftly, circling around behind Old Pete. His Colt was held in his right hand. He shot once, twice, three times. Old Pete jerked convulsively, and fell forward, face down.

The man with the scar appraised him with his eyes, and nodded. He swept up the nuggets and replaced them in the canvas sacks. "He'll never talk now. He can't do anything to us. We'll hit for River Gap. It's only thirty

miles away . ". ."

Sheriff Luke Herbert bent over the dead man lying face down in the desert sand. He glanced up at the sun, and made a swift calculation. He shook his head. Old Pete had been dead many hours, now. No time to get him in to River Gap. He had to be buried here, with stones over him to mark his grave.

He was unstrapping his short-handled spade when he saw the three men staggering toward him across the blazing sands. At first they were dots moving erratically, then they grew larger, and larger. The sheriff put a hand on his holstered gun, and waited,

When they were within fifty feet, he knew them. He had seen the reward dodgers for these three killers who had come down into the New Mexico deserts from the Utah badlands. They were badly exhausted. Their tongues were black, swollen. Their lips were cracked. They need water, he thought swiftly. His eyes took in the canteens fastened to their saddlehorns. Men without water travel in a circle on the desert.

A man with a scar on his jaw croaked,

"Water . . . water . . . water"

When the sheriff saw the sacks, he guessed the rest — especially when the boy in the black shirt saw the dead man and began to laugh with shrill hysteria in his voice, pointing down at him, staggering around weakly.

"Water ... water ... " mumbled the man with the scar, clawing at his throat. "We'll tell yuh ... only ... give us ... water! We did him in. The gold ... was his. He told us ... River Gap only-thirty miles away. We shot him ... took gold. But he got us ... got us ... like the desert breed he is!"

The sberiff went to a big canteen and put it to his lips. He spat out the soapy water. The other man nodded. "He must've hacked up the roots of a soap plant... Indians use 'em fer soap. Dropped 'em in our canteens. Jogging of the horses stirred soap plant roots an' water..."

The sheriff nodded. A man can't drink soapy water under a desert sun. It would get him after a while, as it had these killers. "There's an old sayin' around these parts that the desert takes care of its own," he told them, as he drew out his handcuffs and walked toward them.

- THE END. -

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A FEW MINUTES LATER ... THUH LOOKIT SHERIFF! THET BLACK I HEARD THUH SHOT HE'S -HE'S MASK IN HIS AN' I CAME RUNNIN' .. DAID! HAND! DURANGO!

NOW THET THE SHERIFF'S DEAD, THET MAKES ME SHERIFF! AN' MUH FIRST JOB'LL BE TUH GIT THUH DURANGO KID! DURANGO'S TURNED KILLER AN HE'S GOTTA BE BROUGHT TUH THAT'S WE'LL BACK YUH

JUSTICE ! TALKIN; SI! ALL THUH WAY!



I NEVER DID LIKE

SEEMS TO YEAH ?WAL, STEVE BRAND, IT 'PEARS TUH ME YOURE JUSTA BIT (ME YUH'RE JEST A TOO QUICK) MITE TOO QUICK TUH DEFEND DURANGO! TO PIN THIS' ON DURANGO, MAYBE YOU. HAD SOMETHIN' TUH DO SI STONE. WITH THIS MURDER, TOO -HUH ?





LET'S GIT





ALLI GOTTA SORRY, I JUST SAY IS YUH COULDN'T HELP IT. SHORE WENT SHERIFF MEANY WAS AN'LOST YORE A GOOD PALOF MINE TEMPER.WE'RE AND I WANT TO GET HIS KILLERS. THIS PRACTICALLY WHOLE THING IS A NAKED FRAME UP IF OUTLAWS NOW! I EVER SAW ONE!



HEY! DON'T LOOK NOW - BUT WE'RE BEING FOLLOWED! QUICK, DUCK BEHIND THOSE ROCKS - AND START -SHOOTING!



THEIR HEADS. THEY FIRE, PARDNERJUST DUCKED FER AND THROWING
COVER AN'- HEY! SOME BULLETS
WHUT IN THUNDER
ARE YOU DOIN'?





THE DURANGO KID ...





AGULP! WHUT AM / LAUGHIN'
AT?WE'RE REALLY OUTLAWS NOW!
SI STONE 'LL HAVE THUH WHOLE TOWN
AFTER US! WE AIN'T GOT A FRIEND IN
THUH WORLD! NOBODY'LL LISTEN TO USEVEN DURANGO'S AN OUTLAW!





THE NEXT FEW DAYS ... JUST KEEP KEEP YOUR HANDS WHUT THUH -IT'S NOT YOUR UP HIGH, BOYS-AND COME ALONG WITH DURANGO ON MONEYIM MOVING, AFTER, COWBOY-THUH OWLHOOT THIS IS KIDNAPPIN' MEN! -I WANTYOU! DURANGO - AND YOU'LL' TRAIL! ME!

WON'T BE A MAN LEFT IN TOWN NOW WELL TRY.
YOU GUYS GIT OUT AN' RIDE! DON'T LET'S GO,
COME BACK WITHOUT DURANGO OR BOYS!



AT THAT MOMENT, AT A CAVE IN THE HILLS ...

DONT LET ANY OF THESE PRISONERS) SHORE HOPE GET PAST YOU, MULEY, I'VE GOT A YUH KNOW WHAT FEELING THAT TODAY WILL BE THE YUH'RE DOIN! DAY OF DECISION! DURANGO!







DURANGO BRINGS HIS PRISONER TO THE HIDEOUT ... I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED

WHU-WHUT STAND STILL ~ I JUST YUH GONNA WANT TO PRACTICE A LITTLE D-D-D-D-DO? MARKSMANSHIP!



JET COULD REALLY
SHOOT THE OUTLINE OF A MAN'S
FACE: GUESS IT'S THE ARTIST IN
ME - OR IT MIGHT BE THAT (D)
LIKE TO KNOW WHO KILLED



D. AND WHO FRAMED THE JOB ON ME AND WHY! HMM., NOT BAD AT ALL. NOW LET'S SEE ... IF I CAN SHOOT A LITTLE CLOSER....Y



WO! NO! NO MORE!

I'LL TALK - IT WUZ S! STONE!

HE WANTED TUH BE SHERIFF AN'
RUN THUH TOWN! ALL US

DEPUTIES IS HIRED GUNSLINGERSSI HIRED US FER THUH JOB.

BUT I AIN'T HURT NOBODYHONEST.





THAT'S WHY I HAD TO KIDNAP YOU MEN AND BRING YOU HERE YOU WERE ALL AGAINST ME - THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD GET YOU TO HEAR THE TRUTH!

GIVE THEM BACK THEIR GUNS, MULEY - WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO!



A SHORT TIME LATER, IN TOWN...

NO LUCK, BOSS, ONLY THING THET HAPPENED WUZ WE LOST PETE. HE JEST **DISAPPEARED!**

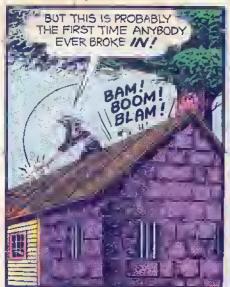
OF ALL THUH DUMB BLANKETY-BLANK-BLANK BLANK---!



HEY, BLAZES! IT'S ALL THOSE GUYS THAT DISAPPEARED - AND DURANGO'S LEAD-ING THEM! THAT CAN MEAN ONLY ONE THING. GET INSIDE, BOYS - AND START SHOOTIN!



















THE END

































WE'VE RECEIVED REPORTS THAT SI BANNIS IS HIDING OUT IN THESE WOODS. OUR MISSION IS TO CAPTURE HIM AND BRING HIM TO GENERAL WASHINGTON FOR THE JUSTICE HE DESERVES!











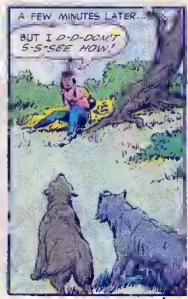


WITH YOUR HANDS TIED, INJUN, YOU'LL NEVER GET YOURSELF FREE FROM THIS TRAP, NOW IT'S JUST PAN BRAND I'VE GOT TO WORRY ABOUT...



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SUDDENLY A WHITE STREAK OF FURY FLASHES ACROSS THE FOREST CLEARING...

























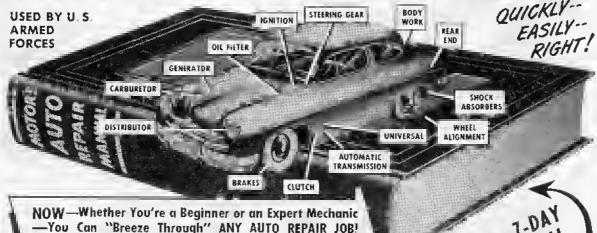








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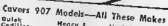
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